

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/17/2022 6:37:04 PM

First name: Buck

Last name: Vandersteen

Organization: Louisiana Forestry Association

Title: Executive Director

Comments: Forests cover nearly two-thirds of our nation's land area. The forests are diverse with tree species, wildlife and a host of other natural resource benefits.

We do not think it appropriate, or scientifically practical, to come up with one definition of a forest condition, old growth or mature forest, that is different in every region of the country.

We think a better use of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management's time would be addressing the conservation, use and sustainability of forest resources. The President's 2022 Earth Day Executive Order recognized the negative impacts that are occurring on our forests due to climate and lack of forest management.

We are concerned that misguided efforts to wrestle with trying to define old-growth or mature forests will take away resources from managed forests. It could also create misunderstandings with the public and cause arbitrary policies that limit the federal agencies addressing climate change impacts on the forests.

We know that a managed forest is a healthy forest. As professional foresters and those engaged in forest management know, a forest goes through cycles and that management activities are specific to the age, size and condition of the stand of trees. What one calls it is not important. Forest management on the ground will prepare our forests for the challenges ahead.